

# HEALTH

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## Frequently Asked Questions about Heart Attack

### How would I know if I were having a heart attack?

Often, it is not easy to tell but there are symptoms people may have.

The symptoms are:

- Uncomfortable pressure, squeezing, fullness or pain in the center of the chest that lasts more than a few minutes or goes away and comes back;
- Discomfort in other areas of the upper body, which may be felt in one or both arms, the back, neck, jaw or stomach;
- Shortness of breath, breaking out in a cold sweat, nausea or light-headedness.

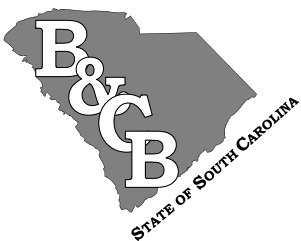
### What is angina and how is it different from a heart attack?

An episode of angina is **NOT** a heart attack. However, people with angina report having a hard time telling the difference between angina symptoms and heart attack symptoms. Angina is a recurring pain or discomfort in the chest that happens when some part of the heart does not receive enough blood temporarily. A person may notice it during exertion (such as in climbing stairs). It is usually relieved within a few minutes by resting or by taking prescribed angina medicine. People who have been diagnosed with angina have a greater risk of a heart attack than do other people.

### What about taking an aspirin?

You should not delay calling 9-1-1 to take an aspirin. Studies have shown that people sometimes delay seeking help if they take an aspirin (or other medicine). Emergency department personnel will give people experiencing a heart attack an aspirin as soon as they arrive. Therefore, the best thing to do is to call 9-1-1 immediately and let the professionals give the aspirin.

Remember that coronary heart disease (CHD) is the leading cause of death for both men and women in the United States. CHD is caused by a narrowing of the coronary arteries that supply blood to the heart and often results in a heart attack. Each year, about 1.1 million Americans suffer a heart attack. About 460,000 of those heart attacks are fatal. Fortunately, everyone can take steps to protect their heart – and their life or that of someone else. The key is seeking medical care as soon as possible.



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